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ABSTRACT

This fact sheet summarizes promising secondary education practices that special educators can employ to help improve the post-school outcomes of students with exceptional learning needs. These practices are organized into the following five categories: student-focused planning, student development, interagency collaboration, family involvement, and program structures and policies. Specific strategies include: (1) identify and document students' post-school goals, learning preferences, and need for accommodations, and use a variety of assessment information as a basis for the Individualized Education Program (IEP); (3) develop educational experiences that correspond with post-school goals and objectives; (4) develop students' abilities to participate meaningfully in the development of the IEP; (5) teach academic skills in the context of real life experiences; (6) teach self-determination skills; (7) interact effectively with community service providers to identify and address students' service and support needs; (8) collaborate with general and vocational educators regarding students' learning needs and instructional programs; (9) provide pre-individual education program planning activities for parents; (10) identify and provide information about transitional services to families; (11) develop outcome-based criteria; and (12) teach students in integrated settings. (CR)

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DIVISION ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSITION

FOCUSING ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO ADULT LIFE FOR INDIVIDUALS OF ALL EXCEPTIONALITIES

TRANSITION-RELATED PLANNING, INSTRUCTION, AND SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SECONDARY SPECIAL EDUCATORS

FACT SHEET

MARCH 2000

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DIVISION ON CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSITION

Focusing on Career Development and Transition from School to Adult Life for Individuals of all Exceptionalities

DCDT

Transition-Related Planning, Instruction, and Service Responsibilities for Secondary Special Educators

Fact Sheet

Over the past decade, our field has investigated secondary education practices that help improve the post-school outcomes of students with exceptional learning needs. DCDT has been extensively involved in this work and many promising practices have been described in the Division's journal, *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals.* An important means to link this effective practices information with secondary education practice is through transition-related professional development at both the inservice and preservice levels.

This Fact Sheet summarizes the promising practices that emerged through research for which secondary special educators should be responsible (cf. Kohler, 1998). These practices are organized according to the five categories in the *Taxonomy for Transition Programming* (Kohler, 1996) and form a foundation for transition-related skill development for secondary special educators. We encourage professional development regarding these practices, in addition to those competencies outlined in *What Every Special Educator Must Know: International Standards for the Preparation and Licensure of Special Educators* (CEC, 1998).

Student-Focused Planning

- Identify and document students' post-school goals, learning preferences, and need for accommodations.
- Use a variety of assessment information as a basis for the individual education program.
- Identify measurable transition-related goals and objectives that focus on post-secondary education or training, employment, independent living, and community and leisure activities.
- Develop educational experiences that correspond with post-school goals and objectives, such as participation in college preparatory curricula and/or in vocational and technical education.
- Through the individual education program plan, specify responsibility for transition-focused instructional activities or services.
- Develop students' abilities to participate meaningfully in the development of their IEP.
- Utilize a planning process that is student-centered and facilitates students' self-determination, including student decision-making.
- Provide appropriate accommodations that facilitate student and family involvement in the individual planning process, and specifically in the IEP meeting.
- Evaluate the progress or attainment of student goals at least annually, including student evaluation of his or her progress.

Student Development

- Teach academic skills in the context of real life experiences.
- Teach self-determination skills.
- Teach social skills for school, work, and community living.
- Teach learning strategies and study skills.
- Teach independent and family living skills.
- Develop students' career awareness.
- Develop accommodations and adaptations that meet student needs across a variety of settings, such as academic, vocational, home, and community.
- Use mentors to facilitate student learning.

Interagency Collaboration

- Interact effectively with community service providers to identify and address students' service and support needs.
- Collaborate with general and vocational educators regarding students' learning needs and instructional programs.
- Provide information about upcoming service needs of students for strategic planning purposes.
- With appropriate authorization from students and families, provide student assessment information to relevant service providers.

Family Involvement

- Provide pre-individual education program planning activities for parents.
- Identify and provide information about transition services and program and/or curriculum options.
- Facilitate parent attendance at individual education program planning meetings.
- Actively include parents and family members in planning and decision making.

Program Structures and Policies

- Develop outcome-based curricula.
- Provide flexible program and curricular options to meet student needs.
- Participate in program and curriculum development and evaluation.
- Teach students in integrated settings.

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